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Activities undertaken in preparation for the International Year of Freshwater, 2003

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/192, in which the Assembly, inter alia, recalled its resolution 55/196, in which it had proclaimed 2003 as the International Year of Freshwater, and requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-seventh session an interim report on the activities undertaken in preparation for the Year. During the Year, all Member States, the United Nations system and major groups are encouraged to raise awareness of the essential importance of freshwater resources for satisfying basic human needs, for health and food production and the preservation of ecosystems, and for economic and social development in general. They are urged to promote action at the local, national, regional and international levels, and to give high priority to the serious freshwater problems facing many regions, especially in the developing countries. The present report describes current and planned activities, initiatives and networking at the local, national and international levels in preparation for the Year. It also provides examples of partnership initiatives among governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as other activities that could be undertaken at the national and international levels. The report proposes a public information strategy and a communications plan for awareness-raising, and provides some recommendations for action to be taken in preparation for the Year.

* A/57/150.

** The present report was prepared by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which were asked to jointly coordinate United Nations activities for the Year by the former ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources in its capacity as the coordinating entity for the Year.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 55/196, the General Assembly proclaimed 2003 as the International Year of Freshwater; encouraged Member States, the United Nations system and all other actors to take advantage of the Year to increase awareness of the importance of freshwater; and called upon Member States, national and international organizations, major groups and the private sector to make voluntary contributions in accordance with the guidelines for international years and anniversaries.

2. In its resolution 56/192, the General Assembly welcomed the activities undertaken by States, the Secretariat, organizations of the United Nations system that are engaged in inter-agency work related to freshwater and major groups in preparation for the observance of the Year. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-seventh session an interim report on the activities undertaken in preparation for the Year. The present report has been prepared in response to that request.

3. In its resolution 55/196, the Assembly invited the former ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources to serve as the coordinating entity for the Year. At its twenty-second session, the former Subcommittee accepted with appreciation the offer of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to jointly coordinate United Nations system activities for the Year. The former Subcommittee also welcomed UNESCO's offer to provide the coordinating secretariat for implementing the programme of activities for the Year.

4. Since 31 December 2001, the subsidiary bodies of the former ACC ceased to exist by decision of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). Since then, the functions of the former Subcommittee have continued through an informal inter-agency mechanism rather than under a standing subcommittee. The present report has been prepared by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with UNESCO and with contributions from other members of the former Subcommittee and interested non-governmental organizations and other entities.

II. Background

5. Awareness of the importance of the use and management of freshwater resources for achieving sustainable development has increased dramatically in recent years, as a result of a number of ongoing national and international initiatives and activities, leading up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in Johannesburg from 26 August to 4 September 2002.

6. During the preparatory process of the Summit, broad-based support has been indicated for the International Year of Freshwater, 2003. In the draft plan of implementation to be considered by the Summit, it has been agreed to promote effective coordination among the various international and intergovernmental bodies and processes working on water-related issues, both within the United Nations system and between the United Nations and international financial institutions, drawing on the contributions of other international institutions and civil society to inform intergovernmental decision-making; it has also been agreed that closer coordination should be promoted to elaborate and support proposals and undertake activities related to the Year and beyond (see A/CONF.199/L.1).

7. Among the Secretary-General's priorities for the Summit, five specific areas have been identified in which concrete results are felt to be both achievable and essential: water and sanitation; energy; health; agriculture; and biodiversity. With regard to water and sanitation, it is expected that the draft plan of implementation will strongly reassert the relevant goals pledged in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (General Assembly resolution 55/2). The Declaration pledged to halve, by the year 2015, the number of people unable to reach or afford safe drinking water. It also resolved to stop the unsustainable exploitation of water resources by developing water management strategies at the regional, national and local levels that promote both equitable access and adequate supplies.

8. The International Year of Freshwater, 2003 provides an opportunity to follow up on the outcomes of the Summit and to consolidate and build upon the many efforts carried out to date to protect, use and manage freshwater resources in a sustainable manner. It allows for renewed and intensified commitment to continue such efforts at all levels. Yet the real challenge is to focus attention on action-oriented

activities and policies that ensure the long-term protection of available water quantity and quality and sustainability of water resources utilization, including sanitation. Collective action is required to build and strengthen the institutional and human capacity to continue sustainable freshwater resources development and protection efforts far beyond 2003.

III. International activities and initiatives

9. Within the United Nations system, matters relating to freshwater resources, including sanitation, are dealt with by more than 23 different bodies. The International Year of Freshwater, 2003 is an excellent opportunity to strengthen and expand existing coordinating and networking efforts among United Nations bodies and other relevant stakeholders at all levels. The Year offers a platform for promoting ongoing water-related activities and policies, bringing together the United Nations agencies concerned with water issues in a common endeavour to assist countries in their efforts to improve the integrated management of water resources.

World Water Assessment Programme

10. One of the main ongoing programmes being implemented by all concerned agencies in the United Nations system is the World Water Assessment Programme. The Programme evolved as a result of decision 6/1 of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which was adopted in 1997. In the decision, the Commission called on the United Nations system to undertake periodic assessments of the sustainable development, management, protection and use of freshwater resources and to provide a global report of the state of freshwater resources and potential problems. In 1998, the former ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources launched the *World Water Development Report*, and in 2000 initiated the World Water Assessment Programme as an inter-agency initiative under the oversight of the former Subcommittee, coordinated by the Programme secretariat and hosted by UNESCO. The Programme provides the background assessment for the *Report*.

11. The Programme can enhance the process of making comprehensive freshwater assessments within individual countries and among groups of countries, such as riparian States that share international watercourses. It can also assist in monitoring progress towards the implementation of targets within countries, and can provide information to assist decision makers in taking specific actions to address situations of water stress and shortages. The Programme encourages the formation of partnerships to monitor progress towards the alleviation of water stress and to recommend actions to remedy unacceptable situations. It also provides a broad mechanism for bringing together relevant inputs from NGOs, academic institutions and the private sector. Information on participating in the Programme is available at its web site at <http://www.unesco.org/water/wwap/index.shtml>.

12. The *World Water Development Report* is the central product of the Programme and is intended to be a comprehensive and scientific triennial report on the state of global freshwater resources. The promotion of the *Report* will be a major focus of the Year's public information activities. Additional and related scientific and political events, exhibits and conferences on freshwater issues will be linked and included in all promotional activities regarding the launch of the *Report*. The first edition of the *Report* will be available at the Third World Water Forum, to be held in Kyoto in 2003.

13. Another product of the Programme will be the production of a regional water development report for Africa; scheduled to be produced in late 2003, it will be the first of a series of regional reports from around the world to be produced in future years. The Programme secretariat will also be involved with other common activities, such as its web site and the development of a travelling exhibit for the Year.

14. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) actively contribute to global water supply and sanitation monitoring and information dissemination under the WHO-UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme. Coverage figures produced by the Monitoring Programme are the official reference data for the United Nations system, including the goals of the Millennium Declaration. In 2003, an updated global water supply and sanitation database (country and regional figures) will be produced based on new evidence and analysis. Drinking water quality, and not just access, is becoming an increasingly important part of the Programme's work. A water quality pilot study, being conducted jointly by WHO and UNICEF during

2002-2003 in nine countries, will test both the microbial and chemical quality of the water at the source as well as in the household.

Regional initiatives

15. The International Year of Freshwater, 2003 offers an opportunity for promoting water-related activities and policies, in particular within the work programmes of the regional commissions, with their close links to interregional, regional and national political authorities. The organization of regional and national workshops for training purposes and awareness-raising among politicians, legislative bodies and other governmental institutions is a major focus of the water-related agenda of regional commissions in 2003.

16. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is contributing to the Year through its publication *Water Conservation: A Guide to Promoting Public Awareness* (ST/ESCAP/SER.F/81, No. 81 of its Water Resources Series). The publication aims at providing guidance to the countries interested in initiating and efficiently carrying out campaigns and programmes at the national, provincial and local levels to raise public awareness of the importance of freshwater conservation for sustainable development. Countries in the Asia and Pacific region have found the *Guide* useful for planning and implementing various activities to commemorate the Year. It has been translated into the Bahasa Indonesia language for a publication and issuance on CD-ROM, and several other countries have requested translation into their respective languages. A summary of the publication is available at <www.unescap.org/enrd/wmrs/publications/wrs/81.htm>.

17. Moreover, ESCAP is planning to carry out a number of national and subregional training activities to strengthen the capacity of the concerned countries of the region in water resources management, using the recently completed guidelines on strategic planning and management of water resources. Experts from several developing countries in the region participated in preparing and adopting the guidelines during 2001, and they will be used to support activities related to the Year. Five subregional workshops are to be held in 2002, and national seminars will be held in selected countries during 2003 for detailed application of the guidelines.

18. An Asian ministerial round table dialogue on water sector challenges, policies and institutional development was organized in May 2002 by ESCAP, in collaboration with the International Water Management Institute, the Asian Development Bank and the Government of Thailand. Ministers and senior officials from countries in Asia, together with the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry of South Africa, identified common water issues and shared experiences, and prepared and adopted a joint statement covering common concerns, shared principles and priorities for action. The joint statement will be submitted to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and to the World Water Forum to be held in Japan in 2003.

19. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) is also linking a number of its various water-related activities to the Year. For example, water issues will have a prominent place on the agenda of the Kiev ministerial conference on the theme "Environment for Europe", to be held from 21 to 23 May 2003, including the adoption of a protocol to the ECE water and industrial accidents conventions on civil liability for damage caused by industrial accidents on transboundary waters, and an environment strategy for the newly independent States that includes integrated water resources management and international river basin issues. In addition, ECE is planning a number of regional seminars to be held during the Year. On the occasion of World Water Day, 22 March 2003, a seminar will be held in Finland on sustainable flood prevention and safety of water construction works; another will be held in the Russian Federation on the sharing of waters in international river basins; and a third is planned for the Netherlands on water monitoring and assessment for planning and decision-making. At the end of the Year, countries will meet in Spain and adopt, inter alia, a long-term water strategy for the whole ECE region and a manual on public participation in water management. Those activities are mainly carried out in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office for Europe and the WHO Regional Office for Europe, supported by a number of NGOs competent on international watercourse issues.

Water for cities

20. There is an emerging consensus that an increasing part of water security challenges will have to be met in the coming decades in cities and megacities, where most people will live, the most water will be consumed and most of the pollution will be generated. During the

International Year of Freshwater, 2003, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is organizing some of its key initiatives around the theme "water and cities", which will be prominently displayed at the Third World Water Forum, to be held in Japan in March 2003. A special meeting on the theme "Water and cities", organized by UN-Habitat, will be held as part of the Forum, at which a flagship report, *The State of Water and Sanitation in the World's Cities*, will be officially launched. The report will provide a detailed overview of the situation of water and sanitation in cities in different regions of the world, and will focus on key policy issues with priority to meet the water- and sanitation-related goals set out in the Millennium Declaration. It will include a compilation of best practices in urban water and sanitation projects, will be complementary to the *World Water Development Report*, and will be published and launched officially as a contribution to the Year.

Assistance to country programmes

21. Information materials to raise awareness at the national level about water resources management during the International Year of Freshwater, 2003 will be disseminated through United Nations information centres and through the network of United Nations resident coordinators. Materials will also be made available through country offices of individual United Nations programmes and specialized agencies.

22. During the Year, for example, UNICEF intends to focus its global water, environment and sanitation programme to benefit children and vulnerable people. It is stressing the need to increase the awareness of government partners, national and international organizations, NGOs and the private sector concerning the importance of freshwater resources for the survival and development of children. Its most important contribution to the Year is through advocacy and action at the country level for improving the access to and quality of freshwater for children's survival and development. Through its ongoing water, environment and sanitation programmes in over 80 countries, the focus is on strengthening the capacities of communities and households to improve and sustain their water security (water supply and water quality). Sanitation and hygiene promotion programmes resulting from improved facilities and making school environments safe are an increasingly important part of the country programmes.

23. Moreover, UNICEF country and regional offices are building their capacities for emergency preparedness and response to meet the water and sanitation needs of vulnerable populations in disasters and conflicts. For example, UNICEF facilitated a conference in Afghanistan in April 2002 that addressed problems of water management for domestic water supply, agriculture and hydropower.

Third World Water Forum, Japan

24. The Third World Water Forum, organized by the World Water Council and hosted by the Government of Japan, will be one of the major conferences dedicated to freshwater issues to be held in 2003. The Forum is to be held in Kyoto, Shiga and Osaka, Japan, from 16 to 23 March 2003. The meeting will bring together the world's leading scientists and water experts, as well as representatives of Governments, local authorities and non-governmental organizations, in order to exchange knowledge and share information. The coincidence of the International Year of Freshwater, 2003 with the Forum provides an opportunity for reciprocal promotion of and cooperation on freshwater issues.

25. The first edition of the *World Water Development Report*, being prepared by the United Nations system, will be launched at the Forum in Kyoto on World Water Day, 22 March 2003. Moreover, UNESCO will release the two volumes of the *Encyclopaedia on Life Support Systems* on the body of knowledge related to freshwater during the Forum in Japan in March 2003.

26. As part of its inputs to the Year and the Forum, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is planning to launch a new initiative on the role and operations of national hydrological services, including the convening of a special meeting on the exchange of hydrological data at the Forum. WMO will also coordinate a series of meetings on flood disasters and flood management at the Forum.

27. As its contribution to the Forum, UNICEF has initiated a process of creating partnerships with children and young people as critical stakeholders for water and sanitation development. It is co-organizing the Children's World Water Forum, on the theme "Give children a voice", at Kyoto, as well as a panel discussion on the theme "Children and young people as stakeholders in the water and sanitation sector". It also plans an art and cultural programme on water, including expositions of international drawing contests,

video/photograph documentaries by children, theatre and poetry.

28. In preparation for those events, during 2002 UNICEF is sponsoring the following activities: preparation of materials, including training materials, to work with children; child-friendly versions of key documents, video documentaries and exhibition materials for the Children's World Water Forum; organization of a technical session at the World Summit on Sustainable Development; and regional consultations and country activities in 10 to 15 countries.

Relationship to the marine environment

29. The Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities is a non-binding global agreement, reflecting the resolve of States to address the serious impacts of land-based sources of pollution and physical degradation on the coastal and marine environments. It is a comprehensive programme designed to assist States in taking concrete actions individually or jointly within their respective policies, priorities and resources. The goal of the Programme of Action is to address the significant impacts on human health, poverty alleviation and food security caused by the continued degradation of the coastal and marine environment through land-based activities.

30. During the International Year of Freshwater, 2003 UNEP's regional seas programme and the Global Programme of Action will feature the "H_2O: From Hilltop to Oceans" initiative, particularly during the Third World Water Forum in Japan and on World Water Day, 22 March 2003. The initiative will also be celebrated by UNEP, in collaboration with many partners, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, particularly in the Water Dome (see para. 38 below) exhibitions and side events.

IV. Public information strategy

31. An effective communications plan is essential to focus world attention on action-oriented activities and policies that ensure the long-term protection of available freshwater. The political process surrounding preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development involves a comprehensive agenda, for which freshwater is a priority. The International Year of Freshwater, 2003, through a variety of awareness-raising activities and public relations outreach, offers a great opportunity for the continuous promotion of freshwater issues and an immediate follow-up to the Summit focusing on concrete activities, respectively. Strategic communications and coordination are crucial to the coherence and success of that effort. Therefore, it has been proposed to include the Year on the agenda of the Communications Group Task Force, which includes collaboration of the public information departments of several United Nations agencies. The communications plan is being developed with the active participation of the Departments of Economic and Social Affairs and Public Information.

32. Based on the communications plan, a travelling exhibit, a web site, educational materials and a global public relations campaign are being developed and will be executed from June 2002 to December 2003. Information and press kits, brochures, education materials for school curricula, videos, radio and TV documentaries and special events are to be included in the communications plan. Special editions of normal United Nations publications and other information materials are part of the public information campaign.

33. The communications plan goal is to accomplish the following objectives:

(a) Raise awareness among the general public about the Year and allow them to recognize linkages between their well-being and the sustainable development and management of the global freshwater resource;

(b) Encourage Governments to develop policies and laws to protect water environments;

(c) Stimulate Governments, non-governmental organizations and grass-roots organizations to advocate for greater investments in the sustainable development of water resources;

(d) Increase bilateral and multilateral donations for the conservation of high priority ecosystems and sustainable development of water supplies.

Educational materials

34. It is planned to develop educational materials aimed at allowing educators to incorporate water issues into different lessons, from world history to math. The content of that material will be based on information from the World Water Assessment Programme and the

World Water Development Report, the exhibit for Johannesburg and the Water Year 2003 web site. There will be a wide distribution of those materials through United Nations information centres and offices throughout the world and via the Internet to Governments, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and other interested parties.

35. The Encyclopaedia of Life Support Systems, being produced under the auspices of UNESCO, focuses on sustainable development in all its myriad aspects — ecological issues, global stability, peace, equity and security. The Encyclopaedia body of knowledge is in about 20 major subject categories and spanned by about 200 subject themes. Each theme is on average equivalent to one print volume of 500 standard pages. The Encyclopaedia will release its two volumes related to freshwater — Water Science and Resources, and Water Engineering Resources — during the Third World Water Forum, to be held in Japan in March 2003.

36. A proposal to produce a series of children's books for the Year has been developed by the Gender and Water Alliance and UNICEF. The books, targeted at children between the ages of 6 and 11, would aim to educate children, parents and teachers about key issues in water and sanitation, and to encourage changes in attitudes and behaviour regarding water use and management. Four book ideas have already been developed, including stories about glaciers and climate change in Pakistan; the beginning and end of the Aral Sea; regaining traditional water harvesting techniques in India; and surviving floods in Mozambique. Once finalized, the books will be launched at a special meeting on water and children at the Forum. Afterwards, the books will be disseminated worldwide in schools, book exhibitions, open fairs etc.

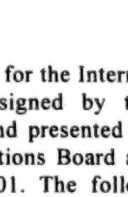
37. In 2002, UNICEF began to design and produce printed materials to highlight progress and solutions for improving the health of children: a brochure on UNICEF water, environment and sanitation programmes; an updated poster illustrating the links between water and sanitation and children's health; sets of posters and pamphlets on various water, environment and sanitation topics, including appropriate water and sanitation technologies; and children's books on water and sanitation.

Water Dome

38. The Water Dome is a major event that will be held in Johannesburg in parallel with the World Summit on Sustainable Development from 26 August to 4 September 2002. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in cooperation with UNESCO and other agencies, is organizing the first official announcement of the International Year of Freshwater, 2003 during a side-event at the Water Dome. The travelling exhibit for the Year will also be launched at the Water Dome.

Logo

39. The logo for the International Year of Freshwater, 2003 was designed by the Department of Public Information and presented to the Working Committee of the Publications Board at its 367th meeting, on 15 November 2001. The following logo design for the Year was approved and is being used for the web site, travelling exhibit and other public awareness activities for the Year:



Web site

40. An official web site for the International Year of Freshwater, 2003 is being launched under the domain name <www.wateryear2003.org>. The web site will be housed and maintained at UNESCO, under the auspices of the World Water Assessment Programme secretariat.

41. The web site will be used as an awareness-raising tool and a clearing house to announce activities taking place at the national, regional and international levels. The web site provides a forum in which to discuss different issues among different groups or stakeholders. A number of different themes will be featured, for each

which a given United Nations agency may take a ading role.

Travelling exhibit

2. Design work has begun on a travelling exhibit, to e launched at the Water Dome during the World ummit on Sustainable Development, that will elebrate and promote the International Year of reshwater, 2003. The exhibit consists of a ombination of multimedia components and graphic ements presented on three curved projection screens nd four curved free-standing panels. The circular xhibit measures approximately 5 metres in diameter. he panels will contain graphic and text information nd computer-touch screens. The touch screens will ctivate stories from the water-related programmes of nited Nations agencies and other partners.

3. The multimedia programme will project short ideo presentations showing the central role water lays in sustaining life on our planet. Visitors will also ave an opportunity to view additional information on e interior walls of the free-standing panels. The total ffect will leave the viewer with a strong emotional npression about water and the knowledge that the nited Nations and its partners are actively engaged in reserving and protecting this precious resource.

4. Following the Summit, the exhibit will be used to unch the Year in New York (United Nations eadquarters), Kyoto (Third World Water Forum) and aris (UNESCO headquarters), and will be made vailable to science museums around the world. unding for the exhibit has been generously provided y the Government of the Netherlands.

V. Partnership initiatives

Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council

5. The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative ouncil is a multi-stakeholder initiative dedicated to nhancing collaboration in the water supply and nitation sector, and is working in close cooperation ith the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. he Council's thematic networks focus on hygiene romotion, environmental sanitation, institutional and anagement reform and community-based approaches, cluding a code of ethics and gender mainstreaming. he Council has recently launched a campaign entitled "WASH: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for all", aimed at mobilizing political support and action around the world to end the suffering of the more than 2.4 billion people who are without access to adequate sanitation and the 1.1 billion without a safe and affordable water supply. A "WASH the World" campaign is envisioned for key conferences and events, and some 30 countries are being earmarked for support to implement the proposed WASH initiative.

46. The Council will be undertaking a number of advocacy and communication activities related to the International Year of Freshwater, 2003, focusing on the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In particular, it will be expanding its outreach to increase public awareness of water, sanitation and hygiene as keys to poverty alleviation and sustainable development. With members in over 140 countries, the Council will continue to play an important role in the promotion of water and sanitation, particularly at the Third World Water Forum, to be held in Japan in March 2003. Throughout the Year, the Council and its partners will be holding dialogues, virtual forums, exhibitions and round tables around WASH-related themes, featuring key personalities, representatives of governments, NGOs and members of civil society, the private sector, men, women and children. The year-long activities will culminate in Dakar, with the holding of the sixth global forum of the Council in December 2003.

Gender and Water Alliance

47. The Gender and Water Alliance, an associated programme of the Global Water Partnership, is a network of 115 organizations and individuals around the world. The Alliance offers a mix of information and knowledge-sharing activities, such as electronic conferencing, a web site, advocacy leaflets and video, annual reports, and capacity-building and pilot programmes. For the International Year of Freshwater, 2003, trained Alliance ambassadors all over the world will use a range of products and services to focus on the essential role of women and children in sustainable management of water and sanitation. The products (in four languages) will include key messages leaflets; a global advocacy video; annual "facts and figures" reports on gender and water; a booklet on successful gender case studies; guidelines for local governments to mainstream gender; a series of posters for use in mainstreaming gender in water resources management;

and post cards with key messages. The Alliance will showcase those materials at the Third World Water Forum, to be held in Japan in March 2003; at the sixth global forum of the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, to be held in Dakar at the end of 2002; and other events.

Other important partners

48. A large number of non-governmental organizations, as well as research institutes and other entities dealing with water issues, have indicated interest in preparing and organizing activities related to the International Year of Freshwater, 2003. Such activities would include international conferences; workshops and seminars on various water-related themes; public awareness campaigns; fund-raising activities and interactive forums; the publication of special editions of newsletters and scientific articles; and exhibitions. Moreover, contacts have been made with other important actors in the field of freshwater resources, including the Global Water Partnership, the World Water Council and many others. It is expected that a strong network of interested parties will be established for the purpose of commemorating the Year and its related activities.

VI. Related publications

49. The *World Water Development Report*, as mentioned above, is the central information product of the United Nations system to be produced during the International Year of Freshwater, 2003. It is intended to be a comprehensive and scientific report on the state of global freshwater resources, and will be widely disseminated. The promotion of the *Report* will be a major focus of the Year's public information activities. Additional and related scientific and political events, exhibits and conferences on freshwater issues will be linked and included in all promotional activities regarding the launch of the *Report* at the Third World Water Forum, to be held in Kyoto in March 2003.

50. The *Natural Resources Forum*, a quarterly journal published by the United Nations with Blackwell Publishing in Oxford, will dedicate its annual special issue for 2003 (May) to the International Year of Freshwater, 2003. Articles for the special issue have been requested from well-known specialists on major freshwater subjects, such as water supply and sanitation for all; water recycling and demand management; water pricing and public/private partnerships; community water management and local water user associations; forest cover and watershed protection; sustainable management of groundwater aquifers; legal and institutional issues and the role of civil society; gender and water issues; special problems, such as arsenic contamination of drinking water; and other water-related subjects.

51. The *International Rivers and Lakes Newsletter*, published jointly by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, will also devote its June 2003 issue to the International Year of Freshwater, 2003. The *Newsletter* explores the legal, economic and political issues related to international watercourses, including treaties and agreements among countries. Other important United Nations journals and publications that provide crucial information on freshwater issues can also be used for promotion of the Year. UNEP's *Global Environment Outlook Report*, to be issued at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, will highlight the state of regional and global water resources, as well as the responses to the threats to them. A special issue of the *WMO Bulletin* will be issued in conjunction with the Year during 2003.

VII. Funding considerations

52. One Member State has contributed seed funding for activities undertaken in preparation for the International Year of Freshwater, 2003. It is expected that other governmental and non-governmental organizations will also provide support to public awareness activities related to the Year. Appeals for funds will be addressed to Governments and private foundations.

53. It is expected that the United Nations system will contribute to fund-raising through a variety of means and projects, including the production and sale of United Nations stamps with reference to freshwater themes. Proceeds from fund-raising could be used primarily to raise awareness of and improve educational programmes about water resource conservation and management in developing countries upon request during the International Year of Freshwater, 2003.

VIII. Conclusions and recommendations

54. Freshwater issues are a concern for all. Because of their increasing political importance, freshwater issues have become a major priority for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The International Year of Freshwater, 2003 provides an excellent opportunity to maintain the momentum and raise public awareness. However, financial contributions and commitments have been limited to date. Fund-raising appeals for the Year will therefore be directed again to all stakeholders, such as Governments, non-governmental organizations and private foundations.

55. **Member States may wish to consider setting up national committees or designating focal points in their respective countries to facilitate and promote activities related to the Year at the local and national levels.**

56. **Interested stakeholders, such as international and regional organizations, non-governmental groups and others, are encouraged to link their water-related activities to the Year, and may wish to consider new partnerships.**

57. **Member States, national and international organizations, major groups and the private sector are urged to make voluntary contributions in accordance with the guidelines for international years and anniversaries.**

58. **Following the example of the informal International Year of Mountains, 2002, Focus Group, composed of interested permanent representatives to the United Nations in New York, interested permanent representatives to the United Nations may wish to convene an informal steering group for the International Year of Freshwater, 2003.**